

Texarkana Urban Transit District



ADA COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT SERVICE Policy and Procedures

**1402 TEXAS BLVD
TEXARKANA, TX 75501
903-794-8883**

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I. GENERAL

A. GOAL

It is the goal of Texarkana Urban Transit District (TUTD), to provide and maintain an efficient and effective transportation service that is complementary and comparable to TUTD T-Line Fixed Route service to all ADA Paratransit Eligible persons with disabilities

B. POLICY

TUTD maintains a strict NO DISCRIMINATION policy whereas no person deemed eligible for ADA Paratransit Service under **49 CFR § 37.123** shall be denied access to the service.

C. PURPOSE

The TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service has been developed to provide a paratransit services to individuals with disabilities that is comparable to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities through the use of TUTD T-Line Fixed Route services.

D. OBJECTIVES

TUTD objectives for the T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service:

1. To provide a “Demand Response”, Origin-to-Destination Service, to ADA Paratransit Eligible individuals with Disabilities.
2. To maintain and support trained staff for both the operation and control of the Paratransit Service.
3. To provide on-going mechanisms for individuals with disabilities to provide input regarding TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service policies, procedures, and implementation.

E. SERVICE

TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service is structured to provide service

complementary of TUTD T-Line Fixed Route Service to ADA Paratransit Eligible individuals with disabilities. TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service will operate on the same Day and Hours of operation as the TUTD T-Line Fixed Route. All services are available Monday thru Saturday 5:30am to 6:20pm. TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service is \$2.50 per trip, per passenger, payable with exact change or use of One (1) Purple Paratransit Ticket. One (1) Personal Care Attendant (PCA) per passenger will ride free so they may assist the passenger with boarding/departing the bus and carrying groceries/packages/etc. All TUTD T-Line Bus Services operate within the Cities of Nash, Wake Village, and Texarkana, TX as well as the City of Texarkana, AR.

In an attempt to better service the individuals with disabilities within our communities, TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service operates within a 1 Mile area surrounding each of the TUTD T-Line Fixed Routes.

F. CONTACT

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II. OPERATIONS

A. GENERAL

TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Bus Service operates in adherence to the 6 service criteria established by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for ADA Paratransit Operations. The service criteria provide regulations on the following:

1. Service Area
2. Response time
3. Fares
4. No trip purpose restrictions
5. Same hours and days of service complementary of the T-Line Fixed Route
6. No capacity constraints

B. DAYS AND HOURS OF SERVICE

TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Bus Service operates 5:30 am to 6:20pm, Monday through Saturday. No Sunday service is provided for Paratransit or Fixed Route service.

Service will **not** be offered or provided on the following holidays:

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Jr Day
Memorial Day
Juneteenth
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Black Friday
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day

C. RESPONSE TIME

TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Bus Service offers Origin-to-Destination, demand response transportation to ADA Paratransit Eligible individuals with disabilities.

The two types of services offered are Subscription and Reservation.

Subscription service – offered in the instances of recurring appointments and/or daily, regularly scheduled commutes and is typically arranged/scheduled as a “standing order”.

Reservation service – offered for any trip requested. Reservations for service can be requested in advance no more than 14 Days before the requested trip day. Per FTA’s Paratransit ADA requirements, passengers may request reservations for Next Day service. In an effort to better serve our communities, TUTD T-line Paratransit Service offers Same Day service **when times are available**. TUTD **cannot** guarantee Same Day service.

All return trips will be scheduled regardless, even if the passenger cannot give an exact return time. Passengers are required to provide an estimated return time and call the paratransit dispatcher as soon as possible if they will not be ready by the estimated time. When TUTD is closed before the next service day, an answering machine will be available to accept paratransit trip requests. TUTD will sometimes be required to negotiate pick-up times, however, TUTD will never negotiate a pick-up time to be more than **one hour** before or after the request time.

D. FARES

Fare Price per One-Way trip for Paratransit Passengers and Companions is \$2.50. Fare is accepted in the form of Cash but must be exact change, or one (1) Purple Paratransit ticket purchased in person or over the phone with the T-Line ticket counter/Dispatch. T-Line Dispatch can be reached directly at 903-794-0435. The Ticket Counter may be reached at 903-794-0746 or 903-255-0367.

Please note: One (1) Personal Care Attendant (PCA) per passenger may ride for free. Please see the Personal Care Attendant and Guest Requirements located in section **III. Eligibility and Certification Procedures** for more information.

E. TRIP PURPOSE

It is the policy of TUTD to not restrict or prioritize the number of trips for any ADA Paratransit Passenger based on trip purpose. No passenger is required to disclose the purpose of their scheduled/requested trip. TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Bus Service will accept trip request for any purpose.

F. CAPACITY CONSTRAINT MONITORING

TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Bus Service will not restrict the number of trips provided to an individual for any reason other than Temporary Suspensions. Please see section **IV. Passenger Responsibilities** for more details on suspensions.

No service provided by TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Bus Service will be restricted because of missed trips, a significant number of late pick-ups, untimely drop-offs, or trip denials.

Below are definitions of missed trips, late pick-ups, untimely drop-offs, and denials.

Missed Trips – A trip that has been requested, confirmed, and scheduled but does

not take place due to TUTD error, such as:

- Arrives and departs before beginning of the Pick-Up Window without indication from the rider that they wish to no longer continue with the scheduled trip.
- The vehicle does not wait the required Pick-Up Window time frame and departs without the rider without indication from the rider they wish to no longer continue with the scheduled trip.
- Arrives and departs after the end of the Pick-Up Window and departs without the rider because the rider has declined the trip due to late pick-up or is no longer present at the pick-up location.
- The vehicle does not arrive at the pick-up location.

Late Pick-up – Occurs when TUTD fails to pick up a passenger for a scheduled trip within the scheduling window. The scheduling window allows for a pickup of 15 minutes before **or** after the scheduled time given to the passenger.

Untimely Drop-off - Occurs when TUTD fails to drop off a passenger within the 30-minute drop-off window. The 30-minute drop-off window consist of dropping off a passenger no more than 30 minutes before an appointment time. Dropping off after the scheduled appointment time is also considered an “untimely drop-off”.

Trip Denial – Occurs when TUTD cannot accept a passenger’s trip request due to not being able to schedule within the “1-hour negotiation window” of the time requested or due to a full schedule preventing the passenger’s requested trip altogether.

On-time Performance – Monitoring of compliance with “on-time performance” regarding missed trips, pick-ups, and drop-offs, will be done by review of manifest every TUTD Fiscal Quarter. If more than five (5) negative feedback reviews are received, the manifests will be reviewed, even if the TUTD Fiscal Quarter review has been completed and is not yet due.

G. COMPLIMENTARY PASSES

Whenever TUTD makes an error that is determined to have greatly inconvenienced a passenger, a “complimentary pass” may be issued a complimentary pass is eligible for use for ONE (1) free ride.

Incidents that may warrant issuance of a complimentary pass:

- Passenger was inadvertently left off the TUTD T-Line ADA Paratransit Service Schedule
- Passenger was stranded on a broken vehicle
- Vehicle arrived outside of the scheduling window (Scheduling window allows for no more than 15-minutes past scheduled pick-up time)
- Others as determined by the TUTD Transportation Manager.

H. INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the unlikely event of service cancellations due to inclement weather, TUTD Dispatch and Personnel shall make every reasonable attempt to contact all scheduled passengers at the telephone number(s) listed on TUTD T-Line ADA

Complementary Paratransit Service application.

I. LOST AND FOUND

TUTD will not be responsible for items left on vehicles, however, if items are found, they will be held at the TUTD Administration Office for thirty (30) days. Every effort will be made to return lost/found items to the passenger on their next scheduled trip. After the thirty (30) day period, all unclaimed items will be donated to a local charitable organization. Passengers attempting to locate lost items should contact the TUTD Administration Office at 903-794-8883.

III. ELIGIBILITY AND CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

A. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

Individuals must be certified “ADA Paratransit Eligible” to receive TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Bus Service. The **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990** defines “ADA Paratransit Eligible” under the following:

- Any individual with a disability who is unable, as the result of a physical or mental impairment (including a vision impairment), and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device), to board, ride, or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities [is eligible for ADA paratransit]” (§ 37.123(e)(1))
- Any individual with a disability who needs the assistance of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device and is able, with such assistance, to board, ride and disembark from any vehicle which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities if the individual wants to travel on a route on the system during the hours of operation of the system at a time, or within a reasonable period of such time, when such a vehicle is not being used to provide designated public transportation on the route [is eligible for ADA paratransit]. (§ 37.123(e)(2))
- “Any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition which prevents such individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location on such system [is eligible for ADA paratransit]. (§ 37.123(e)(3))

B. CONDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY

ADA Paratransit Eligible individuals are often approved on a “conditional” basis. Conditional Eligibility is determined when a passenger may be able to ride TUTD T-Line Fixed Route Service but has one or more of the following conditional restrictions:

- An impairment related condition that creates a sensitivity to radical cold or hot temperatures.

- An individual who unable to maneuver a wheelchair through mud or snow unassisted
- An individual with cognitive disabilities who must use a route other than the one they have learned or been trained to ride.
- An individual who must travel an alternate route where the alternate route is inaccessible to persons with disabilities.

C. ELIGIBILITY FOR VISITORS/OUT-OF-AREA RESIDENTS

Visitors to the TUTD T-Line Service Area, who have been certified as ADA Paratransit Eligible by another transit provider, are automatically presumed eligible for TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service for up to **twenty-one (21) days**. Should the visitor require service beyond the twenty-one (21) day period, they are required to become certified through the TUTD T-Line ADA Paratransit Service Application. Visitors may be required to provide proof of disability and proof of visitor status.

- Proof of Disability examples:
 - Letter from Doctor or Rehabilitation Professional
 - Award of Disability letter
- Proof of Visitor Status examples:
 - Bill or Bank Statement showing the individuals residence outside of TUTD T-Line Service Area
 - Out-of-State ID or In-State ID showing address outside of TUTD T-Line Service Area

*Please note, the above examples are not all encompassing. If you have questions about certain documents and their ability to be accepted – contact the TUTD Administration Office.

D. APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications are available for pick-up at the TUTD Administration Office or for download/print at the TUTD website, www.t-linebus.org . If Assistance is need with the application process – Applicants are asked to contact the TUTD Administration Office at 903-794-8883 and staff will assist. Applications are available in accessible formats upon request.

Applications may be returned to the TUTD Administration Office the following ways:

- Email to: Paratransit@t-linebus.org
- Fax to: 903-794-0437 - Attn: Paratransit

- Postal Mail to:
Texarkana Urban Transit District
Attn: Paratransit
1402 Texas Blvd
Texarkana, TX 75501

Applications must be filled out completely, signed by the applicant, and the Medical Professional who is attesting to the applicant's eligibility/need for TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Bus Service.

TUTD will make decision regarding applicant's request for TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Bus Service from the information provided on the TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Application. TUTD may also require applicants to attend an Assessments of functional abilities specific to the use of fixed route transit services. Should TUTD be unable to make a definitive decision regarding the applicant's request, clarification from the applicant or the signing medical professional may be requested.

TUTD will provide a determination of eligibility within 21 days of receiving a completed TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Application. If TUTD is unable to provide a determination within 21 days, applicants will be "presumed eligible" until a final decision is made.

Approved applicant eligibility status may be categorized as: Annual, Conditional, or Temporary. When the applicant receives their notice of approval, they will be advised of which category their eligibility falls within and when they will be required to provide re-certification information. TUTD will also provide reminder notification 30 days before recertification is due. Applicants may begin using the TUTD T-Line ADA Paratransit Service immediately following notification of approval.

Applicants deemed ineligible for the TUTD T-Line ADA Paratransit Service may file an appeal using the established procedure outlined in **Section V. Appeal Procedures**. Applicants deemed ineligible may reapply at any time following the previous determination. All passenger personally identifiable information (PII) information will be kept confidential by the TUTD Staff unless the release is required by law or court order.

IV. PASSENGER RESPONSIBILITIES

A. GENERAL PASSENGER CONDITION

All passengers must be able to sit in a seat or wheelchair in order to be transported. Any passenger whose medical condition renders the passenger incoherent or requiring immediate medical attention to sustain life will be denied service. TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service does not perform or provide ambulance or emergency services and is to be considered a “common carrier”.

If the driver reasonably believes a passenger’s physical condition or conduct is hazardous and/or the passenger possesses weapons, instruments, or equipment that are reasonably believed to be dangerous, service may be terminated immediately. The passenger will be notified of the termination of service and has the right to appeal TUTD’s decision to terminate service following the established procedure outlines in **Section VII. Appeal Procedures.**

All passengers (PCA and Guest included) must be attired appropriately so that all private areas are adequately covered. Any passenger attempting to board without appropriate attire can be refused service and the scheduled trip may be recorded as a “no show” or cancellation.

B. REQUESTING SERVICE

A request for service may be made the day prior to the requested trip, but no more than 14 days prior to the desired trip time. Passengers provide TUTD Paratransit Dispatch with the following:

1. Name
2. Phone Number
3. Pick-up address
4. Destination address
5. Desired Pick-up time
6. Desired Drop-off Time (or Appointment time)
7. Number of Passengers (Guest, Rider, PCA, etc.)
8. If there will be a Return Trip – approximate time of Pick-up from original destination

A TUTD Paratransit Dispatcher will contact you and confirm your trip.

C. PASSENGER CONDUCT

TUTD requires passengers to be ready no later than the designated pick-up time.

However, TUTD recommends passengers be ready fifteen (15) minutes before their designated pick-up time whenever possible.

TUTD drivers are not required to wait more than ten (10) minutes past the designated pick-up time.

Service may not be provided if access to the origin and/or destination location does not have safe passage for the TUTD vehicle or if the passenger is unable to safely access the TUTD vehicle. The driver will immediately notify the dispatcher for further instructions.

TUTD drivers are **not permitted** to do any of the following under any circumstance.

- Enter a passenger's home
- Maneuver a wheelchair, up or down, more than one step. This rule is provided for the safety of the passenger and the driver.
- Lift passengers

Passengers are required to pay their fares upon boarding the bus. Failure to pay bus fare will result in no service for that trip may be recorded as a "no show" or cancellation.

Profanity, abusive conduct, and harassment towards TUTD Staff and/or other passengers is not permitted and can result in suspension or termination of service.

Examples of Abusive Conduct and harassment

- excessive and repeat phone calls
- inappropriate remarks (racial slurs, sexual advances)
- Physical or verbal intimidation/threats of harm

these examples are not all-encompassing

Eating or smoking is not allowed on TUTD vehicles. Drinking of **non-alcoholic** beverages is allowed when it is from a container with a resealable lid. Passengers are allowed eat or drink to avoid adverse health consequences.

D. TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN

The minimum age for a child to travel alone aboard TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service is twelve (12) years of age. Children under the age of twelve (12) must have an adult accompany them during transport. Only the TUTD Transportation Manager may grant exceptions.

E. “NO SHOWS”, CANCELLATIONS, AND PENALTIES

“No Shows” - If passengers are unable to keep the scheduled appointment time, they should notify TUTD the day prior to the trip. Failure to notify TUTD they are unable to keep the scheduled appointment two (2) hours **before** the scheduled pick-up time will result in a recording of a “no show”. A record of all “no shows” will be maintained at the TUTD office.

TUTD will always work with passengers in a positive way to help reduce and/or eliminate “no shows”.

CANCELLATIONS - A trip cancelled after the two (2) hour window before the scheduled pick-up time is recorded as a Late Cancellation. **Late Cancellations may result in a “penalization”**. A trip cancelled before the two (2) hour window prior to the scheduled pick-up time, is recorded as an Advanced Cancellation, and will not be subject to “penalization”, however, it is requested passengers cancel trips no later than one (1) day prior to the scheduled pick-up time in order to allow for the scheduling of other passengers.

PENALTIES - A pattern of successive “no shows” may result in service suspension. “No shows” and Late Cancellations, with the reasons they occur, will be tracked in the dispatch software used to schedule Paratransit trips. “No shows” are excused when the trip is missed for reasons beyond the customer’s control.

While TUTD understand that “no shows” may occur for reasons beyond passenger’s control, it is still requested and encouraged that the customer or customer’s advocate always make every effort to cancel scheduled trips in a timely manner. It is the customer or customer’s advocate responsibility to provide the reason for not canceling a trip. Lack of contact with TUTD by the customer or the customer’s advocate will be recorded as

no show.

When a passenger's trip history shows a pattern of **10% or more** scheduled trips being recorded as a "No show" or Late Cancellation, they are given a "violation".

See the table below for Violations and their corresponding consequences.

PLEASE DO NOT CONSIDER THIS GUIDLINE AS A JUSTIFICATION FOR NOT CALLING WHEN A TRIP IS NO LONGER NEEDED.	
Number of Violations	Consequence
1st Violation	2 Day Suspension
2nd Violation	14 Day Suspension
3rd Violation	30 Day Suspension

F. SERVICE SUSPENSION APPEALS

A passenger may appeal the TUTD decision to suspend service. Any passenger who wishes to appeal a suspension of service must submit their request for appeal, in writing, within ten (10) days of the suspension notification to the TUTD Transportation Manager.

Passengers are entitled to be heard in person and allowed the necessary support (i.e.: language interpreter) or they may choose to be represented by another person. Passengers will be notified, in writing, of the TUTD Transportation Manager’s decision upon completion of the appeals process and the reason for decision. Typical time frame for Service Suspension appeal decisions to be rendered is ten (10) days from the date the appeal is filed, but this process may take up to thirty (30) days.

G. ACCOMMODATION OF MOBILITY DEVICES

TUTD must secure all mobility devices. **Mobility devices must not exceed size and weight as specified by vehicle, lift, or ramp manufacturer.** Any passenger and Mobility device **must** be able to be safely secured for transport. Contact TUTD Paratransit Dispatch for more specific information

H. PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT (PCA)

TUTD allows a personal care attendant (PCA) to accompany a passenger at no additional charge when a PCA is required for a passenger to utilize the ADA Paratransit Service.

Required assistance is established in the certification process.

Examples of why a PCA may be needed:

Immobility – the passenger is unable stay self-mobile without risk of falling or due to a physical injury.

Disorientation – the passenger is unable to properly orient themselves or navigate to reach a particular destination due to a visual or mental impairment.

Communication Impairment – The passenger is unable to effectively communicate due to sensory or mental impairment.

Personal Care Attendants (PCA) are required to specifically assist the passenger. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Assisting the passenger from/to the door to the vehicle.
- Opening doors
- Pushing wheelchairs
- Assisting with boarding
- Carrying packages
- Communicating with driver (if passenger is unable to do so)

If the PCA does not perform some type of assistance to the passenger, they will be considered a guest and will be charged the \$2.50 fare.

I. ACCOMODATION OF ANIMALS/SERVICE ANIMALS

All animals (other than service animals as described in this section) are allowed to rider ***only*** if they are in a ***secured pet travel carrier***.

TUTD Policy allows service animals to accompany their owner without restraint. Under the **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990**, service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.

J. CARRY-ON PACKAGES

Drivers are allowed to assist passengers take lightweight items off the vehicle and set them on the curb. If additional assistance is required, best effort by the operator will be provided as long as it falls under TUTD Policy. (i.e.: Drivers are **not** allowed to enter a passenger's home)

V. APPEALS

TUTD is committed to providing due process for any person with a disability who has been denied eligibility for the TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service.

Texarkana Urban Transit District has established an appeal process for the following:

- An applicant for ADA paratransit or an eligible rider recertifying eligibility who is denied eligibility or given conditional or temporary eligibility may appeal the decision.
- An ADA eligible rider receiving notice of service suspension due to a pattern or practice of no-shows may appeal the decision.

Any applicants wishing to submit an appeal of Texarkana Urban Transit District's denial or suspension of service must submit an intent to appeal in writing, and it must be filed within 60 days of notification of the eligibility determination or of service suspension.

- The written intent to appeal should be sent through the following channels:

By first class mail to
Texarkana Urban Transit District
ATTN: Paratransit Appeals
1402 Texas Blvd
Texarkana, TX 75501

OR

by Email to
Paratransit@t-linebus.org
Please have the subject line read
"Paratransit Appeals"

Texarkana Urban Transit District asks the applicant include their reason and supporting documentation with the written intent.

Once the intent to appeal is received Texarkana Urban Transit District will schedule an Appeals Hearing with the TUTD Operations Committee within thirty (30) days. The applicant will be notified in writing of the date, time, and location of the hearing. The applicant may attend along with a PCA/Representative. If the applicant wishes to appoint a representative to come in their place, they may do so. Decisions on appeals will be made within thirty (30) days of the Appeals Hearing, applicants will be provided with the decision and the reason in writing.

If the applicant is a new applicant for the TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service, ADA Paratransit Service **will not** be provided until a decision has been made regarding the appeal.

TUTD T-Line ADA Complementary Paratransit Service **will** be provided until the appeal decision is made, if the following apply:

- Passenger filing appeal is currently eligible for ADA Complementary Paratransit Service but recertification has been denied or they have been recertified for conditional or temporary eligibility only.
- Passenger filing appeal is currently eligible for ADA Complementary Paratransit Service but has been issued a service suspension.